

Vital Events – Deaths – Deaths from Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease

The Definition of the Statistics

National Records of Scotland codes the cause of death according to the rules of the World Health Organisation’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

The codes used to identify dementia and Alzheimer’s disease are as follows:

F01 Vascular dementia

F03 Unspecified dementia

G30 Alzheimer disease

ICD-10 has been used by NRS to code cause of death since 2000. Prior to this, the ninth revision was used (ICD-9). The ICD-9 codes which are used to identify dementia and Alzheimer’s (290 and 331.0) are not strictly comparable with those used in ICD-10 and therefore this section focusses on statistics from 2000 onwards only.

The Impact of the Implementation of IRIS Software in 2017

In January 2017, NRS implemented new software (IRIS) for coding the cause of death, replacing the previous MMDS software. Although there is a large degree of agreement between the two versions of the software in allocating causes of death to ICD chapters, the new software allocates more deaths than the previous software to dementia as the underlying cause.

Although the number of deaths from dementia and Alzheimer’s has been increasing over several years, the change in software led to a larger increase between 2016 and 2017 than would otherwise have been seen.

More information on this change is available from the paper on the impact of IRIS on the [Death Certificates and Coding Causes of Death](#) page of our website.